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"THE TWO FORMULAS"

DRAMA IN FOUR ACTS

AND

ELEVEN SCENES [with Epilogue]

BY

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CHARACTERS

Mrs. Randall - The Housekeeper

Jessie - Her daughter, about sixteen years of age.

Marty - A boy from the neighborhood, Jessie's cavalier

Donald Jasson - a student } Roomers of Randall's Apartment.

Camilla Policarp - an intelligent office girl

Bill - a nephew of Mrs. Randall, working himself up to a politician

Barber - an old bachelor

Joe

Jack

Dick

Girl

Baby

Mayor-Governor

Street-crowd.

A C T O N E

SCENE ONE

A living room at Mrs. Randall's. An open door to a hallway on the right leads to the rooms in the boarding house. There are other doors on left leading to the street and to Mrs. Randall's apartment.

Miss Camilla Policarp sits in a chair reading a book.

Jessie stands at the door left and looks at Miss Policarp as if trying to say something.

Camilla: (Raises her head from the book, looks a while at Jessie) What are you looking at me so attentively for, Jessie?

Jessie: I want to ask you something.

Camilla: What is it you want to ask?

Jessie: I was just wondering whether you ever had a fellow.

Camilla: Why ask me such a question, you little silly?

Jessie: Why, I am in love myself, and I just wanted to know whether you too have been in love.

Camilla: It would do you a lot of good if you stop thinking of it. You are too young to understand what such things mean.

Jessie: But I am in love just the same. You know him. It's Harty, and he loves me too.

Camilla: (laughs)

Jessie: What are you laughing at? That's no joke. We are going to get married soon.

Camilla: Really? Oh, then it isn't just puppy love as I supposed.

Jessie: I don't know what you call it, but I know I am going to marry Harty, because I love him, that's all. I wonder why you haven't married yet, Miss Policarp. You are a nice girl, and you read a lot of books.

Camilla: That's just why I don't marry. The boys are too precautious now-a-days.

Jessie: (not sure) You mean... they are afraid of books?...

Camilla: He-he-he, that's too, may be a reason, but the main thing they are afraid of, is. that they can't make a living.

Jessie: And my Harty doesn't care a bit. He says, that he is going to make a living any time, as long as he has me.

Camilla: At that age, my dear, you are not afraid of anything, it's true, but it is not for me to take it that way.

Jessie: But you are not old yet, and you are not going to stay alone all your life? I don't see how you can do it, and don't even see how you could till now... it must be tough to be without a fellow... I know I couldn't...

Camilla: Neither could I... but I got used to it... Thank God there are books: they help a lot.

Jessie: Oh, I don't know much about books but it isn't the same,I suppose. I once read a book, but what is the good of reading books, if you can't get what's written in them. I like Harty much better then books, because I feel he loves me too.

Camilla: But you are so young, and your mother seems to be very much opposed to it. I heard you had a quarrel yesterday

Jessie: And there is going to be a bigger one, today, but I don't care, Marty, and I made up our minds to elope if she is going to start up again...

Camilla: I don't think you have to do that. After all you can wait another year, Marty also is still a boy.

Jessie: No he isn't, and we can't wait; we mustn't.

Camilla: You mustn't?

Jessie: Well, we couldn't, both, I and he...

Camilla: What do you mean you couldn't?

Jessie: Oh, we just couldn't..... What's the difference. Don't I love him?

Camilla: Well, if that is the case, you might as well go and get your license and be over with it before you get yourself into trouble. You are too young to get a kick from life.

Jessie: Well if something happens, I know what to do.

Camilla: (Somehow astonished) You know what to do? What do you know?

Jessie: Marty said we can go to a doc-----

Camilla: Oh, stop it, stop talking like that. Good God! What don't these youngsters know already? It's frightful, I am telling you.

Jessie: I am not afraid. I don't see what all the fuss is about. If you want to get married, you have to know everything, and I am going to.

Mrs. Randall: (Comes in) Yes, you will. If that boy comes in again, I'll throw him out of here.

Jessie: If you are going to do that, we are going to elope. I love Harty and I don't care a bit about what you say anyhow.

Randall: You say another word, and I'll lock you up in there, and have that boy arrested. I told you time and again that you are too young.

Candida: (Who pretended to read while the others were talking raises her head, reproachfully) How unmotherly it is to talk that way. Every one has learned that monkey talk. "You are too young, too young." How could she be young to be married, when she has such strong desire to marry. How did you feel in her age? How did I feel?

Randolph Well, you can't do everything you feel you want to do. That's why we are human beings with brains...

Candida: (Sarcastically) Ha-ha-ha. That's why we are human beings with brains, to suppress our feelings until the thing naturally desired becomes a mysterious craving.... Yes, that's why we are human monkeys with brains! He!

Randall: Well, I don't know what you are talking about, but I know one thing: He can't make a living and she can't marry him!

Candida: (Getting up impatiently) A living! A living! That is all we have learned. It's disgusting (goes quickly into her room).

Randall: These cranks are getting on my nerves. Why doesn't she marry herself, instead of giving somebody good advice? What in the world are you going to do after?

Who is going to support you, you crazy little thing? He doesn't even make enough for himself.

Jessie: But he has got some ideas; and he says he is pretty sure he is going to make a nice living after we marry.

Randall: That kid is going to drive me crazy. I have never heard of a girl so foolish as that. How could you believe his stories, when you see that he hasn't a cent to his name? How could you expect him to have anything? He is barely twenty; all alone in the world; he has no parents except his cousin that isn't better off than he is. Are you crazy? What has come over you?

Barber: (Who came in passing towards the hall, motions to her with his fingers, good humoredly) Yes, my dear girl, you had better listen to mother. She knows better, she knows better (and he goes off towards his room).

Randall: You bet I know!

Jessie: Oh, that talk! I have heard it a thousand times. What do you care about me, anyhow! It's I who love Harty! If I am going to suffer... well, I don't have to if I don't want to! Harty says he loves me terribly, and I love him, and I don't see any reason why we shouldn't!

Randall: (Furious) Now, listen lady! I see there is no use talking to you. You get in there quickly, you are not going to see him.

Jessie: But he is coming here.

Randall: He will not!.. Now go into the other room before I pull you in...

Jessie: No, you won't.

Randall: (Running over to Jessie) Yes I will! (she grabs her by the shoulders to push her into the next room)

Jessie: (Resisting) Stop it, now! Stop it, I say!

Donald: (Comes in from the street) What's that? I hope you are not fighting?

Randall: (Still pushing Jessie towards the door of another room) Yes, we are! Please don't interfere, I am not in a mood to listen to any lectures now. (She releases Jessie while talking)

Donald: My dear Mrs. Randall, I have never lectured you. I know you are not susceptible to that, but that isn't the way to lecture, either. You might get punished for treating your child in such a manner.

Randall: What, Mr. Jason? I have rented you a room; kindly use it!

Donald: Yes, Mrs. Randall, I know it; but I also hired the privilege of using this room too, if you can just remind yourself.

Randall: Yes, I do! For reading your books to yourself, not for others.

Donald: Very well, Mrs. Randall. (He goes into the hall towards his room)

Randall: And all on account of him. Now let me see him dare to come in again; it is going to be murder, I am telling you.

Marty: (Runs in) Hello everybody! You are not talking about me, Mrs. Randall, are you?

Randall: That's just it! And I want you to get out of here, before I'll get the broom and sweep you out of here.

Marty: Wait a while, Mrs. Randall. It's a bit too late for that. Jessie and I are engaged, - and am I right, Jessi

Jessie: Yes, he gave me this. (she exhibits a ring on her finger)

Marty: (Excited) But that isn't all, Mrs. Randall. I am going to fix up a business for myself; and I and Jessie are going to be happy. My cousin Jack is going to help me. Isn't he, Jessie? And the first thing -

Randall: Now you stop telling me your lies. You ought to be ashamed of yourself buying a ring in the "Five and Ten" and that little fool takes it as it goes. Why don't you -

Marty: But, Mrs. Randall! You are wrong. This is a real diagond (he takes it off Jessies finger) Just look at it!

Randall: (examines it, indifferently) Well, whatever it is, put it into your pocket, and say good-bye.

Marty: (Weighs the ring in his palm, contemplatively) Well it doesn't matter where the ring is going to be; we might have to use it soon, anyhow; but Jessie is mine just the same; and if you would be a good mother you would congratulate us, and help us get the license, because they won't give us the license until you come and say she is twenty.

Randall: (Reposes with an air of satisfaction) You just wait till I go with you. You'll have to wait some time, my boy. Take a seat, and wait till I come back either with your cousin Jack or with a policeman. (she goes out)

Jessie: Well, what are we going to do, anyhow? What if she won't go with us for the license.

Marty: I think I got an idea.

Jessie: (Opens wide her big, childish eyes) Really? What is it, Marty? Tell me, honey, quick!

Marty: Well, I am not sure it's going to work, but we'll have to try it, anyhow.

Jessie: Well, what is it???

Marty: They say there is a state where we can get the license just the same. If it isn't too far, we might go there.

Jessie: You mean there is a state where they don't ask your age to give you a marriage license?

Marty: Why, of course. Didn't you know that? Oh, you are a kid!

Jessie: But why can't we get it here if they give it there?

Marty: (Short) I suppose some politics.

Jessie: Oh, what's the dif? We can't go if it is too far away.

Marty: Why?

Jessie: Because we haven't got the money.

Marty: You are right there, and I hate like hell to spend the couple of dollars I saved for that little business of ours. You know, you don't save a hundred and twenty-five bucks now-a-days every year.

Jessie: What are we going to do, then?

Bill: (Comes in) Hello! What do you want to do, Jessie?

Jessie: I want to get married.

Bill: What keeps you back? I am ready.

Marty: No joking, Bill. The judge won't give us a license, because she is too young, he said.

Bill: He-he! Why did you tell him your real age, you puppy.

Jessie: But we didn't tell him. Marty said I am twenty, and he wouldn't even believe it. He said we should bring mother and my school papers: and if she says it's all right, then it is all right.

Bill: You don't look like twenty, sure enough, although you are quite full around here. Good enough to make a nice spring mother.

Marty: Now you stop that, Bill. She is my girl, and I won't stand any insults even from a big bully like you.

Bill: (Laughs) Why, you are a real hero.

Marty: You'd be surprised.

Bill: Are you?... Why don't you get your marriage license, if you are?

Marty: Well, this is something that you can't go against the law.

Bill: Ha-ha! Who said so?

Marty: The judge, - didn't he, Jessie?

Jessie: Yes, so he said. It's against the law, he said.

Bill: What would you give to break the law?

Marty: I would give anything.

Jessie: Why no, Marty! We don't mean exactly to break the law; we just want to get married.

Bill: All right, let it be your way. How much could you give for that pleasure?

Marty: I haven't got a hell of a lot, but I can spare I think, a couple of dollars. What do you say?

Jessie: I think we spare a dollar fifty.

Bill: For that money, you can buy yourselves two big lolly-pops. (he starts off to his room)

Marty: Wait a while! What's the hurry? You don't expect me to give you a thousand, do you?

Bill: But you can't do business with a politician for a dollar fifty? I have no time to bargain. Could you pay fifty bucks?

Jessie: My goodness!

Bill: Could you pay twenty five?

Marty: But how can you do it, anyhow?

Bill: That's not your business. Here is my card (makes a pose) I am Bill, and live at Mrs. Randall's hotel, room "A-One". You can call on me any time when you get the money.

Marty: We have some, but we have to go over and give a deposit for the place. You know, we are going to open a lunch room right here on Eight Street. It isn't much of a place now, but we'll fix it up ourselves ~~xxxxxxx~~properly. A friend of mine is going to do the lumbing for almost half to nothing. He is a nice fellow.

Bill: You better watch out there with the plumbing.

Harty: What do you mean "watch out"?

Bill: Don't ask me too many questions. I say "Nick" is the plumber there, and he is doing the plumbing in that neighborhood.

Harty: What of it? Can't I have my own plumber?

Bill: You may try, if you want to. But I give you good advice not to start with Nick. It is histerritory, and no one else is doing the plumbing there.

Harty: And what is he doing to do if I am going to do the plumbing myself?

Bill: Ha! Why not, if you'll show him your license as a plumber.

Harty: Who the hell is he anyhow to ask me for a license?

Bill: I see, my boy, you know very little of real politics.

Harty: What politics do I have to know if I want to get married and fix up a little place to make a living?

Bill: (Laughs devilishly) Ha! ha! ha! You'll find out, all right.

Harty: He can't do anything, can he?

Bill: Why not much: but some day, that friend of yours, who wants to do your plumbing for almost next to nothing, might be found in the river, or some other quiet place, or, sometimes, if this fails, your plumbing might be leaking after the first day it is fixed.

Jessie: My God! Is that what they do?

Bill: Yes, that's what they do. Well, I hear our prima-donna is coming. I am in there if you want me. (he goes towards the hallway, and meets the Barber who is carrying a violin case, he puts both his hands to his waist, and follows the old man in a critical manner) Now, will you ever tell me, why in the world are you always carrying around a fiddle when you don't know how to play.

Barber: If you will ever understand what a fiddle is, then I'll tell you why I carry it around.

Bill: You don't tell me anything: just let me hear you play.

Barber: You will not understand it. So what is the use of playing?

Bill: Now, come! Don't give us your philosophy: give us a piece of music. Now come on, Barby. If you'd be a real artist, you'd not let yourself be asked; you would just play.

Barber: But a real artist does not play for every one.

Bill: Why?

Barber: Because he knows that it is useless to scatter pearls among swine.

Bill: Oh, is that so? I'll show you what swine means, you old (he makes a step towards the barber aiming a blow at his chin)

Camilla: (enters) You will not dare, you---!

Jessie: Why don't you go your way, Bill?

Bill: What a house of cranks my aunt has got together. Take care they shouldn't make you crazy, too. (goes off whistling)

Herbert: (Pale, pacing a few steps back and forth like an insect in danger) A world of gangsters, that's what we live in. (He looks gratefully at Camilla, and walks out)

Camilla: (Sits down) Am I intruding? I want to listen to the radio, if you don't mind. There is the Boston Symphony on now.

Jessie: Go ahead. We are going out, anyhow. I wish it's tomorrow and we get it over.

Marty: We might as well; no use waiting. Good-night Miss Policarp; be prepared for our wedding.

Camilla: I wish you luck.

Marty: Thanks! We can use a bit now. Well, let's go, sweet.

Jessie & Marty: (walk out).

Camilla: (turns on the radio. She gets a symphony: and listens a while, trying to get engulfed in its sounds: but she cannot gather herself: and reluctantly, she picks up the book and turns the pages wearily until she finally puts the book away.)

Donald: (comes in: stands a while undecided: then says quietly) Good evening, Camilla.

Camilla: Good evening (with a faint smile) Have I taken your seat? I have quite adopted myself to it since I am out of work. It's comfortable to read here.

Donald: It is perfectly all right. I can take any place at all. (He sits down on the nearest chair)

Camilla: (turns off the radio to a faint distant echo)

Donald: Why did you stop that pleasing music? It would not disturb me. I like to read when music is on.

Camilla: Not everything good is pleasing and appreciative at every moment. Sometimes you are not in a mood to listen, even to good music.

Donald: Did Mrs. Randall give you a piece of her mind, too? She is getting more and more insulting. I guess I'll have to find another room.

Camilla: What is the difference? You are not at home wherever you are. It is getting tiresome to live that way. I wish I could find something to do; you then have less time to think and the means at least to spend for recreation - for a bit of diversion - in order to forget one's self.

Donald: Why so tragic Miss Camilla Policarp? Has anything happened?

Camilla: That wouldn't be so bad Mr. Donald Jason. The trouble is that nothing happens, and you get neither joy nor a thrill out of life. I did not feel it so hard when I was harnessed to my job; but now we are deprived even of that. My God! how long can I stand it! I want to work at least. I want to work! I want to live.

Donald: I did not expect that from you Camilla: I know it is not such a great happiness to live like we do; but is there happiness in an expensive furnished apartment? Don't those, who possess it, always run away to seek other distractions?

Camilla: I don't know where it is, but when you are deprived of becoming a mother or wife, you must find something else in life. I have nothing..... nothing...

Donald: Oh, I see... Well, to the problem you just mentioned, marriage is a very good solution. Why don't you get married?

Camilla: (looking up to him from under her brows) Why do you suppose I don't get married? Can't I ask you the same question?

Donald: Oh, it is quite different with me. I am in the midst of my studies. I don't know whether it is of any use studying. There are thousands of graduates in every field who cannot make any use of their diplomas. Still I must go on. I graduated as a physician you know. Then I got interested in chemistry. There is nothing else to do, anyhow (after a while thinking) It is in general different with boys than with girls. The boys can't take any chances, since there are so many responsibilities in getting married.

Camilla: And where do you suppose are girls going to get boys to marry. Then every boy has a different evasion to marriage.

Donald: Oh, well, I think there are still some who have funds enough to afford that pleasure. I don't see why you

shouldn't get yourself one. You are an intelligent girl, quite attractive. It's no use waiting for the lover to come and fall on his knees to ask your hand. Since marriage now-a-days consists mainly of a modern bed room with all the modern facilities required to it. As for the person - well, you may as well go and try but try the one of course who promises more conveniences (there is a pause for a while, then he begins reflectively) I heard you say once that a natural desire suppressed becomes mysterious; and it is quite true. The primitive boy knew of no difficulties. Once he felt mature, he picked his girl as any animal does; and without any fear or precaution he transmitted life. But, we, the modern people, meet in our nature time the most absurd obstacles created to suppress our natural desires even though one gets married, and that is why man, the highest intellectual creature finds misery instead of joy in the essential stimulus of life. We have, within centuries adopted that state as a matter of fact. But it is an abnormal life that we lead, just the same.

Camilla: And what if one can do without all modern improvements? If we are intelligent enough to understand, why shouldn't we make use of our knowledge?

Donald: What we understand is different from what we usually do. I heard many of my friends complain of that. People usually forget very quickly what they

think at such moments. When a person is drowning, he will hold on to a blade of a razor: but, when he feeles again ground under his feet, he wants new shoes - and fancy ones.

Camilla: (thoughtfully, lowering her eyes) It is not so, Donald. Give me a bench, a few pictures on my wall, and a good amiable friend, and I'll walk on bare footed. It is tiresome like this. You may laugh Mr. Jason. I am not a student of philosophy and have no right to relate to any one my notions, but many times, when I walk along the streets and see so many young boys and girls walking aimlessly without any hope to find something for their wretched lives, then you plunge into an abyss of darkness. What will become of these young people? Of what will our future life consist? A frightful feeling embraces you - you get a notion as if the world is coming to an end, as if, before we look around, we'll find ourselves deteriorated and wiped off the earth.

Donald: (philosophically) Who knows? May be that, too, is one of the secrets of life. We are entering a civilization of synthesis. Everything becomes condensed, worlds of thoughts and speculations are embraced in single sentences, sentences into terms - a synthesis! Thousands of horsepower are concentrated into a machine - a synthesis. The human kind will also have th synthesize itself to the

complex of a supreme creature. It may be that we are the beginners of that synthetic world to come! Somewhere in our darkness there must be light! It must lead us somewhere...

Camilla: (Skeptically) Us? Where? and what after?

Donald: After?... Who knows? May be the very aspect of the world will change. May be the kingdom of God will reign, and may be that the inevitable destruction of our devitalized planet will approach.

Camilla: (after a while thinking begins gloomily) I see. I see. I begin to understand it now. Life needs victims. It is with our blood and sufferings that we might synthesize that complex of a kingdom of God (ironically) and then go lost into eternity, and then again into nothingness. (Bitterly) Who the devil needs it? Give me a glimpse of light today, and let that Kingdom of God wait another million years. I want to feel my bit of creation rather than dispose my painful thoughts for tomorrow.

Donald: But life does not ask you what you want, my dear, you are just reading books, whether you want it or not.

Camilla: I will stop it! I will go out into the streets and pick on the first one who catches my fancy. I'll play him if necessary and get it over!

Donald: (Sorrowfully) And then?

Camilla: I don't want to think of what it is going to be after. It was Jessie, that little fool that gave me a lesson today.(in tears) They know better. They know better.

Donald: (Goes over towards her, and puts his hand on her shoulder, speaking warmly) You and I should not cry. If a bed and few pictures, and a good friend could do to make life less tedious than it is, then save your tears, they might impress themselves on the heavens, and the Kingdom of God may come sooner than you have ever expected... We'll cut our expenses from to night on. We are going to have one room Camilla. (He bends on his knees, mechanically taking her face into his hands, and, looking into hisxhands her eyes a while, he utters his question somehow undecided) Are you satisfied?

Camilla: (looks at him slightly amazed, but gradually changes her look into a felicitous approval, but still speaking in an undertone) So..... he..... - Then the lover on his knees came after all

Donald: Yes, Camilla - if this can prove that I love you.

Camilla: (Looks again into his eyes searchinglyy then kisses him)

Mrs. Randall: (comes in, observes the scene a while, then, walking towards the door of her rooms, she makes a grimace, saying) Oh?..... No wonder about.....

(C U R T A I N)

A C T O N E

SCENE TWO

The same setting as in the first scene.

Jessie: (Sits on the sofa, holds a little mirror in one hand, and with the other holding a little tweezer, she plucks her brows intensely)

Randall: (Brushes some pictures on the wall: and, with a grave looking face, listens to the constant humming that comes from Camilla's room.)

Bill: (stands at the hall-door, ready to disappear) What do you want with the pictures at this time of the day? You are not cleaning now, are you auntie?

Randall: (doing her work assiduously) It is not your business why and when I am doing my work.

Bill: Oh, I know you! You can't fool me. You came in here purposely, because you heard me talk with Jessie. You keep your eyes open on your girl all right. What are you afraid of, for God's sake. She is married, isn't she?

Randall: That's still worse.

Jessie: Oh, mother, stop it, will you! You better tell me what it was that you wanted to show me.

Bill: I just thought you were becoming a Broadway star when I saw your name in the papers. I picked up an old paper at the barber's, and there I saw your grand name in it. Ha-ha-ha!!!

Jessie: My name?

Bill: Here! Take a look at yourself! The "Public Opinion" says that you wanted to elope but you were stopped. Here, read this: "Jessie Randall girl sixteen, attempt to elope, is stopped in time and married off here." Ha!

Randall: What are you talking about? How could the papers know?

Jessie: (Beaming) But, mother, here it is in the "Public Opinion"

Randall: I wonder why they call this paper "Public Opinion". They don't ask me what to write, do they?

Bill: That's just it, auntie. They call themselves "Public Opinion" because the public has no opinion of its own.

Randall: If I had no opinion of my own, I would not dust my pictures at this time for no reason... Yeh...

Bill: You said a mouthfull, ha! ha! Well, I guess I better go and take a rest - if that prima-donna would only stop giving me a pain in the neck with her singing (he goes off)

Randall: I wish she would stop for a while (a picture suddenly drops to the floor and the glass breaks into fragments) Here! I just felt it coming! That girl there makes me dizzy. She hasn't stopped singing for a moment since morning - could you imagine any thing like it! Not for a moment has she stopped since she opened her eyes.

Jessie: (doing her work) And what did you want her to do- cry? She has it all right now. Mr. Jason is very

good to her and she is good luck for him too. You know that she got him a good job thru a friend of hers - the girl that comes to visit them frequently. She gave him a job as a head librarian somewhere. It isn't too much of a job, but they don't care; as long it is steady, they are satisfied.

Randall: (Gathering the pieces of glass carefully) So it does pay to read books after all.

Jessie: Well, if you can make a living any thing is good - even being a librarian.

Randall: Not as good, though, as having a lunch room, I suppose.

Jessie: Well, if you have luck you can make a better living selling sandwiches than books. Now you better tell me how you like the way I fixed up my face? (She looks at a picture of a popular movie actress, then observes her own face in the mirror) Well, don't I look exactly like my Hollywood darling (she makes a pose)

Randall: Well, you look like her all right. But you and she, look like monkeys to me.

(Marty's voice is heard from outside)

Randall: There he comes your supporter. If you would at least stay there, he wouldn't be so much in a hurry to come home so early.

Marty: (Comes in) Hello darling mother! What are you crumbling your old sweet bones for?

Randall: Now stop darling me. A fine business man you are, to close up so early.

Marty: There is nothing much to lose now, anyhow. The main rush is noon time. Besides, we are going to the movies tonight.

Jessie: Now, you stop making speeches and get washed before it gets too late, as last time.

Marty: O. K.

Camilla: (Comes in with a bright smiling face) Oh, excuse me. I thought it was my Donald talking.

Marty: I never knew you could sing so well, Mrs. Jason.

Camilla: He! he! I never knew it myself. It was my Donald who insisted, and it's getting quite a habit with me.

Randall: Quite a habit! You didn't stop for a minute the whole day long.

Marty: My dear mother-in-law keeps account of every minute of the day. He! he! So-long! (goes off)

Camilla: Really? I hope you don't mind my singing, do you?

Randall: As long as my pictures on the wall won't suffer it. I just dropped one. I might break them all till I get used to it. (all laugh)

Camilla: He-he-he!!!. You get used, in time to everything.

Randall: (carrying out the debris in a tragic manner) You might as well, if you can't help it. (she goes out)

Camilla: Your mother makes a fuss over everything. It reminds me very much of our old pious cat that always used to growl when our canary in the cage started to sing.

Jessie: She doesn't mind so much your singing. She is very superstitious, and, whenever a thing breaks, she believes its bad luck.

Camilla: Oh, those old prognostications! Let her not get nervous and not drop anything, and she will save herself the fear of bad luck.

Donald: (comes in) Good evening!

Camilla: Good evening, Sir! (she kisses him) Well, I am ready dear. We could go right now, if we didn't have to wait for Victoria.

Jessie: I guess I'll leave you, and see that my Harty gets washed tonight. (she goes out)

Donald: Why, you were discussing something, weren't you?

Camilla: Oh, we were just talking something about her mother's fancies - I am so glad we are supping out to night. We are going to have a real holiday.

Donald: We deserve a little holiday, after brooding such a long time I haven't felt so much at ease in my life. What couldn't I do now, dear Camilla. I can go on even studying at home, having you beside me.

Camilla: And I am so happy to think that I am the cause of it. If life had something in store for me, I could not wish anything better.

Donald: And you do look as if all your wishes are fulfilled. How charming you look tonight! How extraordinary happy you look!

Camilla: (looking into his eyes with love) Don't you know that I am happy; don't you know that I am?

Donald: Of course, dear, I know; but I have never before seen such a gleam in your eyes. - Now let me look at you - (he inspects her face admiringly) You are beautiful, Camilla.

Camilla: No, you make me blush, Donald.

Donald: I can't help it, dear. You are becoming sweeter every day...

Camilla: Well, there must be a reason...

Donald: Is there? Why, of course, there must be. Won't you tell me then?

Camilla: If you want me to tell you.

Donald: Of course, Camilla.

Camilla: Sure?

Donald: Is there anything I may not know.

Camilla: No. Nothing, dear. You shall know everything, Donald. It is you. It is your fault that I am so happy. (Blushes) We are going to have a baby (She kisses him)

Donald: (Opens wide his eyes, as if frightened by something, but soon forces a happy smile on his face) Oh, so it's that - he, so unexpected - I mean -

Camilla: Dear... Donald, aren't you glad? I thought now that we are -

Donald: Please, dear, what makes you think I am not. On the contrary, I am very happy. I always wished for an opportunity - but it just came so unexpectedly. I thought we had to be prepared to - I mean it is for the child that shouldn't have to suffer. But I am happy, indeed.

Camilla: You only say so, dear, to please me - but your face - oh I am sorry - I didn't know Don...

Donald: There is nothing to be sorry for; in fact, I am very sorry, darling, to be so stupid as not to appreciate such genuine joy that could so brighten your face. Come here, dearest, forgive me. (He takes her hands in his)

Camilla: (gives herself reluctantly into his arms; he kisses her several times, but there comes no response; her thoughts are occupied now with some strange planning; every word she utters sounds uncertain, until she arrives at some conclusion that she bitterly accepts. She displays, gradually, that tragic make-believe but she cannot disguise the deep fear beneath)

Donald: Please, Camilla, don't be angry with me. I was a fool. I was a fool.

Camilla: No, no, dear, don't feel so bad about it. It is not your fault.

Donald: It was just that constant fear of consequences which governs and presses upon our minds, that could make me hesitate for a moment. But it was foolish, and I am really sorry.

Camilla: No, you don't have to be sorry either, because it was a foolish trick I played on you to spoil such a pleasant evening.

Donald: What do you mean a foolish trick? I don't understand you, Camilla.

Camilla: He-he, don't you? Don't you understand what trick means?

Donald: But -

Camilla: Oh, don't be so tragic. Come, don't spoil it to the end. Victoria will be in soon; make yourself ready to go.

Donald: No, Camilla. I will not go until you tell me what it all means. I -

Camilla: (Puts her hand around his neck) No! Oh, you big baby! Don't you understand? It was only a fancy of mine, he - he. I just wanted to enact a rehearsal to see what it looks like when you go into that children business - hey-he-he.

Donald: (gloomily) But, I don't believe you, Camilla. You are not speaking the truth now. No! I don't believe you!

Camilla: Ha-ha-hoo! I must have played my part pretty well to have disconcerted you so. Oh, please, Don dear, let's forget it for a while.

Donald: I can't, Camilla. I am afraid that you are trying to play a role now. Please, don't do it, dear; don't do it.

Camilla: Why, Don, you don't suppose I would lie to you, do you?

Donald: (looking into her eyes helplessly) I don't know. I can't make out anything now. I wish you wouldn't have told me all that, if it was only a fancy.

Camilla: I am sorry. I didn't know you were so sensitive. Now forget it please. We mustn't spoil the evening, and that girl Victoria is very inquisitive; so don't make any remarks about it, either. Now come in there and make yourself ready.

Donald: Let me stay here a while. I want to relax.

Marty: (From the other room) What's the difference? (he comes in) Hello, Mr. Jason! Doing good I heard, he?

Donald: Not bad. And how are you getting along in your business?

Marty: Oh, nothing much in there; but you have got to stick to it until you find something better.

Jessie: (who came in after Marty) That boy is never going to be satisfied with anything.

Marty: Oh, what's the use? This is no business for me. I am going to quit it some day. This is a job for a man with no brains - and I have brains - and I am going to use them, too!

Jessie: If you can use them for making a living, then it's all right. There are a lot of men with plenty of brains, but they use them in the wrong way.

Marty: Then there must be something wrong with their brains, but I am going to use mine in a prpper way. That's no business for me selling sandwiches and canned soup, when I feel I can do something better. It's a dirty shame, honest, that I didn't see it before.

Jessie: But what can you do? Anyhow, we haven't any money to start something else, so we might as well stick to this business. They say that "Horn and Hardard" started from a little coffee shop. Why shouldn't we try our luck in this?

Marty: Oh, you are a kid! There is no use talking to you.

Jessie: Well, I might not be as clever as you are, but I understand something. You can't get anywhere without money - we saw it right from our marriage license; didn't we?

Harty: But the business I am going to do, is something that you need no money for; and still it must go over big.

Donald: And what is it that you intend to do without money?

Harty: It's a patent! You see, it must be a patent that I'll find for something, and then you get what you want. How do you think "Horn and Hardart" got rich? Because they got a patent. And how did "Wrigley" make millions? Because he was the first with a new patent - chewing-gum. You see?

Donald: Yes, that was a great invention, indeed. Never in history did any one make so many cattle out of men as did Wrigley.

Harty: Well, I don't care what it is, but what I have to do is to find some patent - anything but new - you get that? (He taps Jessie's nose playfully)

Donald: A patent ye, ha-haha! (stretches himself lazily) O-o-America, sweet land of liberty, when will you stop being patented. If an investigation were ever made at the patent office of America, the longest record of idiots the world has ever registered would be revealed. In no country in the world have there been recorded so many absurdities misscalled inventions, as here.

Jessie: I think Mr. Jason is right. You are not educated enough for that. I think one must be educated to find a patent; it's common sense.

Marty: Nonsense. Common sense! What kind of an education to you need to mix something and give it a name? Look at the professor in the colleges. They don't find any patents. Look at our own professor (he points to Don) Has he ever made anything worth while to patent? It's a skill (knock) that's all, and I think I have got it. It is in my head, I am sure, but I can't get it out yet. You just watch me, some day it will come.

Joe: (comes in) Good evening! Taking a rest?

Marty: Might as well.

Camilla: Now come, Donald, you have to get ready (she goes out, Donald following her)

Marty: What's doing there, Joe? Making out good? I guess this neighborhood isn't much of a gold mine, hey?

Joe: May be for my boss. He doesn't care much for money - he has his fiddle and his bachelorship, but this is certainly no place for me.

Marty: What do you intend to do then, sell peanuts?

Joe: May be that isn't so bad, either, but I have got something better, and, if this works, I'll not be giving shaves and haircuts for the rest of my life. Yes sir.

Marty: And what is it that you are going to do?

Joe: Oh, that's something we might call a secret. These

things are not told before everything is fixed up. It's a patent.

Jessie: You mean it? Really? Oh, tell us, please. He won't tell it to anyone. My Harty is also trying to find some.

Joe: Oh, I don't know about yours, but mine is already made up. I've got it even patented in Washington, and it's O.K. What I need now is a backer, one to back me with some money and the thing will go off big.

Harty: Well, tell me, may be I'll back you.

Joe: You back me! Ha! ha! ha! How much money have you got?

Harty: You'd be surprised. You don't take me according to my business - it's just for a while that I got in there - but I am just looking for something to invest in.

Joe: Well, if you talk business, we might really do something great. But it must remain between us. You see, it's a tonic that makes the hair grow and it will make the best in the market. You see their all tonics: they are not worth a damn; they just kill your hair; it's only the name they got, but mine is something real good.

Jessie: Oh gee! We are going to give one bottle to Jack. He is getting bald headed, isn't he, Harty?

Harty: We'll see about that later. What I want to know is, how can you be sure that your tonic is going to work right.

Joe: I have tried it out. You see, this tonic is made from pure olive oil and some other mixtures. If we buy those things in quantities, a bottle of that tonic will cost us almost next to nothing; and, if we put out on the market a nice sized bottle for twenty five cents each, everyone would give us a trial. Of course, we have to get busy if we want to do something. This is a proposition that you don't get every day; but, once you make a good start, you are a made man.

Marty: (Thinking hard) Well, I guess you got a good idea. (pensively) I wonder if we could start with fifteen cents a bottle.

Joe: Oh, no! That's too cheap. The people wouldn't believe it's any good if you sell it too cheap.

Marty: Damn right! I myself wouldn't buy it, if it was any too cheap.

Joe: What do you say then? Will you invest a thousand at least?

Marty: I guess we'll have to look it over. You don't invest a thousand just on a guess, do You?

Joe: You can't make any better investment, if you ask me. I am a barber and I know the weakness of people to want to look young. There are plenty who would pay any amount to have their hair stay, or make them grow again. They are lazy to wash them and keep them properly clean, but they'll always use a tonic. It takes a wise man to find out these things and it's only by working some weak spot in people that you can

really make money. You have to know where to touch someone's weakness - do you get that?

Harty: But there is nothing new about your tonic. They have plenty of that sort.

Joe: You don't know what you are talking about. This thing I got is something new, but even if it isn't people will try it, if it has only a new name and is being well advertised.

Harty: I guess you are right here. We'll have to see about it. May be it needs a little improvement, you know. I myself am also not less of an inventor. In fact, I got some sort of ideas myself. Didn't you hear her talking about mine? We might be partners there too; but we'll first look over your tonic, and, if it needs any improvements, we might as well do it together.

Joe: But my tonic is all completed. I won't let anybody spoil it. It's just perfect; and, if you want to be a partner, you just make the investment on the products and first advertisements; that all.

Harty: No, sirry! The money ain't all. If I am a partner, I want to use my head. I must add something to it.

Joe: But what can you add? You are not a barber!

Harty: Never mind I am not; but I have brains, haven't I?

Joe: Well, what would you suppose in addition?

Harty: Oh well, I have to think... in fact, I was thinking of something a minute ago... (He looks a while pensively at the cigarette between his fingers, and carefully removes the ashes from it with the little

finger on the palm of his other hand. He looks at the ashes a while: then, turning his head to Joe, speaks toughtfully) Say, how about puttin' in some ashes in our tonic?

Joe: (jumps up) What? Goung to spoil my tonic? you are crazy! You are crazy!

Marty: Now, don't call me crazy! I know what I am talking about. If you just listen to me I can tell you something about ashcam, and a real good one.

Joe: But I don't want to listen to anything.

Marty: All right, then I am going to patent it myself.

Joe: You can use your ashes as much as you want, but you are not going to use any of my stuff I told you.

Marty: Why, you can't prevent me from using olive oil and that other thing - any one can buy it in the drug store.

Joe: But what a crazy idea you got. They are all going to laugh at you. The tonic will look like a shoe polishing liquid. Ha! ha!

Marty: No it won't; and, don't think I am crazy. I don't care what you say. I remember when I was a kid and my mother was a girl - oh, what to hell am I talking about - you mix me all up. It was my mother's sister - she was a girl then - so I watched her many a time get the ashes out of the stove and put it into hot boiling water, then she waited till the ashes settled, and then she carefully poured the clear water into an other pan, and washed her

hair: and you would be surprised what suds there was - actually like from soap.

Joe: And what has this to do with the tonic I made up?

Harty: Well, it might kill the grease of that oil: people don't like to go around with oily heads, and then it cleans the scalp. I am sure of that. That aunt of mine had the shiniest prettiest hair in our town. He, he, well, what do you say now?

Joe: M' it sounds quite logical. I think we might try it.

Harty: O. K. Now go and get dressed. We'll go to the movies, and there we'll talk it over, and some day you won't have to shave peoples' beards.

Joe: (Enthusiastically) O.K. boss. I'll be seein' you soon (he runs off)

Jessie: (bursts out) Oh Harty, you are a darling. I'd never think you were so smart. You are a real gem, honest. Oh gee, we are going to be real rich now.

Harty: You leave it to my head, sweet. (he pinches her cheek) We are going to get it. Gee it isn't bad at all to be as smart as I am.

Jessie: You bet! Oh, kiss me, Harty. I like you so much.

Harty: You said something: and, if you are going to be a good kid, and keep quiet then I'll tell you that I am going to keep the whole business for myself.

Jessie: What do you mean?

Harty: I mean that I am going to use his mixture, and my ashes as my own invention. Just wait till I get it all down on paper.

Jessie: But that won't be fair.

Marty: That's fair enough for such a dummy, having an invention and doing nothing with it. Besides it isn't the

Maid oil and that other stuff that makes the difference. It's the ashes, do you get that? It's the ashes that makes it something new.

Jessie: Yes, of course, it's the ashes: don't I understand? But really, Marty, how could you think of such a great idea?

Marty: Well, it's in the family. Do you remember I told you something about my cousin Jack?

Jessie: Yes, you told me he was only a bootblack.

Marty: But he had brains, and he worked up a real business. Do you see that shoe shine parlor near the Pennsylvania with twenty people working in it, all in two straight lines?

Jessie: How did he do it? See, he must be clever like you.

Marty: And a clever idea he got once. He was just like me - always thinking of working up something new - and what do you think he did once? One day I came to his stand to pay him a visit, and I saw from far away a crowd gathered up there. I came near, and I hear some one making clever remarks, and some bursting out laughing. What to heck is this, I think. There must be something wrong; but I see, no, Jack is very busy shining and a boy helping him out. What's the fun here, I ask him? And he points to a sign he made up himself, and it was some sign, and some clever words, let me tell you.

Jessie: What was it? Please tell me, Harty. What did the sign say?

Harty: It went something like this. "The shoe shine with the artistic flavor, its toasted and lasts to the last drop. If you don't believe us give us a trial. You may enjoy the pleasure for one nickel; but if you give us more, we never refuse. We guarantee full satisfaction, because it floats, and it tastes better. If you don't get it now, you might just have to get it from the twenty first millionth jar. Thank you! Call again!"

Jessie: Oh my! Isn't that beautiful. Why don't we go over to see him. We sure must go over to see him. See, he must be a poet!

Harty: We'll have to see him, any how I'll turn to him concerning this invention. I am pretty sure he'll lend me a hand. He is a sport, and he likes to gamble on a profitable proposition.

Jessie: I wish he would.

Harty: You bet he would, so, it's settled, he?

Jessie: (shaking her finger) But you must buy me a nice car.

Harty: And what a car! Well, I'll go and see what he is doing there. It takes that barber a year till he gets dressed. He is just like a girl... (he goes off quickly)

Camilla: (Appears alldressed up. She steals in as if she were waiting for the chance to be alone with Jessie) You are still home. I thought you were going to the movies tonight.

Jessie: Of course, we are going. We are only waiting for Joe. He is going with us. And what are you waiting for? Weren't you supposed to go somewhere?

Camilla: Yes, of course, we too, are waiting for Victoria to come. We are all going to a dance recital.

Jessie: Really? And there are going to be prizes?

Camilla: Ha-ha. No. That is not a contest that wex are going to. It is something like a concert of artistic dancing.

Jessie: Oh, I see. I was always dreaming of becoming a dancer, but Marty wouldn't like me to become a chorus girl; and, besides, there are so many on the market nowadays, that you hardly have a chance.

Camilla: It's good your dreams carried you so far. It is much healthier for a girl like you to become a mother than a dancer. By-the-way (looking into her pocket book) I have just found an address a while ago. It must be that of your doctor whom you once told me your Marty recommends as an expert on maternal cases. It would not be a bad idea to have his address in case of an emergency, he-he. May I keep it?

Jessie: Why not? But I didn't carry his address with me. I always keep it in my drawer.

Camilla: (pretending, still searchingly her pocket book) Oh, then it must not be the same, I suppose.

Jessie: Let me look at it.

Camilla: I don't see it any more. Funny isn't it? It must be a mysterious piece of paper - he-he.

Jessie: Well, tell me the name and I'll tell you whether it was the same.

Camilla: (poses thinkingly) I think is name was Godfried - or - yes, I think Godfried.

Jessie: No, it wasn't the same, then. But I can give you his address just the same. You might as well keep it. There! I hear the boys are coming. I'll ask Marty. He must remember it.

Camilla: Oh, it's not necessary now. You'll give it to me tomorrow. There is no emergency, yet. He-he.

Donald: (comes In) It is getting late, dear. Shall we call Victoria?

Camilla: Please do, Donald. If she hasn't left yet, we'll meet her down-stairs, all right?

Donald: If she didn't forget all about our appointment. Everything is possible with that girl.

Camilla: Well, try, please.

Donald: (Withdraws into he hall)

Camilla: (Whispering shyly) Don't tell Mr. Jason anything. I mean -

Jessie: (Opens her eyes suspiciously) You mean, something has really happened?

Camilla: (Assuming a reproachful pose) Oh, don't be so ridiculous. I just don't like men to know about these things. It is...

Jessie: Why if they know ----

Donald: (rushes in) As I told you. She was just lying over Giovanni Papini's "The life of Christ" and she forgot all about the recital.

Camilla: That girl is certainly a peculiar one. What does

she want with "The Life of Christ" by Papini. Let her read the gospels if she wants to know him.

Donald: I am sure she has read every book on Christ. She wants to find there some explanation (or refut) to her own life, but I am afraid she will not.

Jessie: You know, I didn't tell you, because I didn't want to hurt your feelings; but your friend Victoria has a funny looking face. She always reminds me of a boy looking like a girl.

Camilla: Oh, don't be silly!

Jessie: Well, she does look like a man, if you want to know; and, besides, I can never remember her face the minute she leaves here.

Donald: It is good you don't remember her. She doesn't like to be remembered, neither does she like to be see very often. So, you see, it works according to her will, he-he-he. "Will" is a great power my girl, he-he. Well, let us go down, dear. We'll meet her at the U.S, she said.

Camilla: I am ready (she puts her hat on) Good night, Jessie, have a good time.

Jessie: We have them very often, we go twice a week to the movies and you certainly get your moneys worth now. They show two big features, besides some news reels and some shorts, etc.

Marty: (Comes in dragging Joe along) Well, here we are ready to go. I hardly could get him away from the mirror. He fixes himself up as if he has to attend a beauty contest.

Joe: (self conceited) I know you envy me looking smart, boys, well, it's up to the barber to be your example.

Donald: That's right all.(exit followed by Candida)

Marty: And let me tell you, Joe, that it is going to be some example I'll set. It is going to be a tonic that even a barber couldn't dream of.

(All laugh walking towards the door)

(C U R T A I N)

A C T T W O

SCENE ONE

The same setting as in the previous scenes.

Marty: (Stands near the table, all dressed up, and marvels at his own creation, examining a fancy shaped bottle containing his mixtures. A few more bottles of various sizes are standing on the table. He points his forefinger, talking to the bottle in his hand) Now, it is up to you, to make me or to make a fool of me.

Randall: (comes in) Whom are you talking to?

Marty: To my bottles, dear mother, and I'll be damned if they don't smile to me. Just look at them, don't they smile?

Randall: I see that you are all out of your mind. You have made everyone crazy here with your bottles.

Marty: And everyone makes a living. They seel like hot-dogs: and, before you'll look around, we'll see these darling bottles advertised in the subway trains and all over the world. I'll make them, I'll make them!

Randall: Yes I know you will. If you could make Mrs. Jason go around and distribute your bottles, then it wouldn't surprise me if you made your bottles talk.

Marty: (Beaming) And they will talk. They will tell the world a story never heard of before.

Donald: (comes in)

Harty: Here is Mr. Jason. I am very sorry for him, but look at his face. He lost his job, so he lost the whole world. He is going around looking for jobs, something he'll never find now. Why in the world don't you accept something that is offered you. You are educated. Very well! Why don't you use your education for something that people pay. Here is a chance for you. Get into this business. You'll get a salary, and, later on, if business goes over big, you'll even draw dividends.

Donald: (Sits down, ignoring him)

Harty: Oh, well; no use talking with these small guys. He would rather let his wife go around peddling my bottles, then to sit in front of a desk as a decent person would, and -

Donald: Now, please, Mr. Harty, don't give me your moral advice. I never liked ashes. I liked the oils; and if people, nevertheless, pay for ashes, then it is your good luck, but don't try to induce any one to do something that he whole-heartedly detests.

Harty: You don't have to like it. That's exactly why I want you as my secretary. You can't entrust something new to one who would like it too much.

Donald: That's just what it is. A fine invention like yours could easily be copied. What the plagiarist has to to is, to add to your ashes a portion of dung. That would give it the right smell, and the right color.

Harty: So, that's what you think of my tonic. Ver well, sir, we shall see. (he turns to Mrs. Randall) Now you better see that Jessie gets ready. I'll call Jack.

(The Barber comes in)

Randall: There he comes - another sermon, I suppose.

(she goes out)

Barber: No use preaching to people who were born to serve the devil. It just hurts to know that you have to live with such people, and you don't know them until they suddenly show their real faces.

Marty: What did I do to you that you are going around brooding and telling stories everybody?

Barber: I am telling no stories to anyone. I just tell them the truth. You have ruined that poor boy's life. He would lay sleepless for whole nights, sometimes weeping hysterically so that my heart would break, until finally he disappeared, and God knows what will become of him. When I last saw him he looked like a wolf. I asked him to come back, but he wouldn't listen. He hates the place here, the streets around, he hats everyone on account of you.

Marty: Now, why the devil, do you put all the blame on me! I didn't refuse him a partnership, but he is too nervous a boy. When he saw me putting in my extract of ashes, he began to cry as if he was crazy. "I spoiled his tonic" he said. Well, so I simply made it my own; and, now when it proves a success, he has no claims on it, and no one in the world is going to induce me to take in one as a partner who can do nothing but whimper.

Barber: Well, my boy, you may say what you will, and I am not very religious, but there is something in nature that calls one to account. You are not so sure yet about your success, my boy. Unless you clean your hands of dirty work, and your conscience of devilish implications.

Marty: You don't know what you are talking about. If there is anything in nature that keeps records, why in the world is he, the educated fellow, out of a job, and his wife must go around and sell my tonics to make a living? Why haven't you attained fame with your fiddle which you love so much, instead of becoming a barber? I'll tell you why! Because you are nature's fools, that's why! If anybody wants something let him go out and get it. Nobody is going to bring it to you if you sit and wait for it.

Barber: Yes, that's a very fine speech, until someone will come and take it from you. We'll see what you are going to say then.

Marty: If I'll be damn fool enough to let any one take it, then I'll deserve nothing better. You live once, that's all I know.

Barber: Oh well, no use, no use, my boy. I guess I'll move from here, too. The air is getting to congested here.

Donald: (Standing up from his seat) Mr. Marty is moving out soon into a very rich neighborhood, so you might save yourself the trouble of moving (he goes towards the hall door and meets Jessie coming out)

Jessie: (Arrayed in the most extravagant outfit, walks in imitating every bit of her Hollywood favorite) Aren't you going with me, Mr. Jason? We are going with to a cabaret tonight.

Barber: (Disappears)

Donald: No, thanks. I know plenty of civilised people who have lived their lives without going to cabarets. (He goes off)

Marty: And I - Oh, you better stop boasting about our affairs for these cranks.

Jessie: Why not, it helps to boost our tonic. I wish everybody would come with us. Gee, a cabaret must be interesting.

Marty: Were you never in a cabaret? I would never expected of you.

Jessie: How could I, Marty? I never had a boy friend before you. Have they dancing girls there? And can we dance, if we want to?

Marty: How do I know?

Jessie: Were you never in a cabaret either?

Marty: I couldn't go when I was in my cradle, could I?

Bill & Dick: (Come in)

Bill: Here I am, big boy. This is Dick (all shake hands) You need no better man for that purpose. Within one week, you'll see all your bottles shining in all the big drug store windows. You just leave it to him.

Marty: Well, I guess he knows his business.

Dick: I certainly do, Mr. Marty. I meet no difficulties in adjusting my business, because I approach things in a sure way, "Take it or die!"

Bill: By the way, this is the same gentleman that got you the marriage license.

Jessie: Oh yes, I remember. Of course I do

Marty: What luck! If you meet once, you are bound to meet again. Well, I am glad I did meet you. Friends come in handy. It is always good to have someone to call on. I wish Jack would come and we could talk over business while having a drink. Will you excuse me for a minute? I'll go and call him (he goes into the hall)

Bill: I'll let you entertain my niece, Dick; and I'll go and ask my dear old auntie whether there was any mail for me.

Dick: Go right ahead. I won't be lonesome here with your darling, little niece, I am sure.

Jessie: (being flattered, smiles the broad smile of her Hollywood darling)

Bill: (goes out)

Dick: So you are the girl I got the marriage license for. How different you look since then. You look quite pretty.

Jessie: It's nice of you to make me feel good. Since my Marty got into the movie business I can afford to dress myself nicely, and everybody says it suits me.

Dick: I should say it does; but it isn't the dress that makes a girl look beautiful, it's her personality.

Jessie: Really? Oh, I never knew that.

Dick: I wish I could prove it to you.

Jessie: How could you?

Dick: Very simple. I am ready to pay fifty bucks this minute to see your whole personality without the trace of a dress.

Jessie: Oh, don't talk like that. Marty might hear you.

Dick: It is for that reason that Marty and I are going to a cabaret.

Jessie: What do you mean?

Dick: Just what you hear.

Jessie: Oh, that's terrible.

Dick: Not after the first time. Just try it, and you'll see how good the second will be.

Jessie: Try what?

Dick: (Puts his hand on hers) Just one little kiss.

Jessie: Please, don't. I love my Marty.

Dick: I know you love him, but this has nothing to do with love; it's flirtation. That's why young ladies come there with their husbands, to flirt with others.

Jessie: But Marty will be mad.

Dick: No, he will not; and you wouldn't hurt his feelings much either. He purposely went to call. I don't know whom he is really calling, but he went just the same to give you a chance, so that he may have his when we come there.

Jessie: You mean it?

Dick: I repeat it, and you might as well get it over now. Gee! How young and fresh you look (he attempts to kiss her)

Bill: (Appears suddenly, puts his hand between the two) Wait a while, I knew her before. She is my niece (and swiftly he bends over and kisses her)

Marty: (Comes in at that moment) What's that? a kissing party?

Dick: (puts is hand on Marty's shoulder) No harm in that, brother. He gave her a good start, and no charge for it.

Jessie: (In tears) Oh, Marty, why did you leave me here with these roudies? (she tears herself from the chair, and quickly walks over to Marty)

Dick: Ha! ha! ha! Don't run away "Jazy". The worst is over. You'll get used to it in time if you see us more often.

Jack: (Comes in hurriedly) Hello, there! I see you know each other.

Dick: Pretty close (all shake hands)

Bill: How don't make a stop here, Jack. Let's go.

Jack: I am sorry, Bill, but I have to discuss some business with Marty before we go. You'll have to excuse me gentlemen. We would like to be left alone at present. We'll xxx meet you at the place in about half an hour, or so. Any objections

Bill: Of course not. Have you, Dick?

Dick: Not in the least. Our business is almost settled. We'll be waiting for you at the Century (Bill and Dick leave the room, and the rest are seated near the table)

Jessie: Why can't you talk business at home, Jack?

Jack: We are doing what everybody does - we combine business with pleasure. Time is short, my dear girl, and if you can get a double portion you should never refuse it.

Jessie: If it helps in any way, I'll let my boy do business wherever he pleases; butI'd prefer my pleasure at home and not where such nasty people like that Dick can enter.

Marty: Oh you are a kid.

Jack: It goes with you too. You have a habit of boasting too much about the tonic. Now listen, Mart, did you tell them any details about our business?

Marty: Why?

Jack: Just tell me, do they know everything about our tonic?

Marty: I didn't tell them anything. May be she busted out while I was calling you, these women...

Jessie: But I didn't say anything, Marty.

Jack: Then, it's all right. You keep away from everybody. I believe we are going to put over a big thing. Now, listen to this. It's no business for us to keep on distributing bottles on such a small scale. We have to get some big connections, and I think we'll soon have it.

Marty: That's exactly why I have tried to engage Dick. You know, we have to be very careful with connections, Jack.

Jack: No worry about that. I wish they would only accept it.

I have already spoken to a responsible party, and he will let me know pretty soon - and one that is worth a thousand Dicks.

Harty: Who is that party?

Jack: He is one of the main chiefs of the "McHugal Chemical Institute?". He comes in to me every day for a shoe shine. I told him about our tonic, and I told him we already have a great demand for it. He wants to meet you; and he said he is going to propose it to the institute; and, if they accept it then it means a million dollar proposition. Well? How do you like that?

Harty: (Looking smart at Jessie) So, the big car is coming after all?

(An alarm of a police wagon is heard from the outside)

Harty: (Stands up hastily) What's that?

Jack: (Hummingly) Ha! ha! ha! The big car came, my boy.

Jessie: It's the police, I think; they stoped somewhere nearby, didn't they?

Jack: I don't know. Now don't get excited; we have nothing to be afraid of.

Harty: (attempts to gather the bottles on the table)

Jack: What for? Ha! ha! ha! Let them stay here.

Harty: I - If they ---- they might think it's liquor if they come in.

Jack: Well, let them. What will they come here for?

Camilla: (comes in) There's the police down stairs.

They arrested Mr. Hill and some other man with him right near the drug store.

Jack: That fellow Dick is a hustler all right.

Jessie: I don't like him.

Jack: If you are in business, you must take everything as it comes. That's part of the game. Well, let's go.

Camilla: I wanted to tell you something, Mr...

Marty: (Hastily) I'll talk to you tomorrow, Mrs. Jason. Good night (All, except Camilla, hurry out)

Camilla: (sinks down on the sofa, placing the little basket full of bottles beside her: and, after a while staring at the bottles on the table, she closes her eyes resignedly)

Barber: (Comes in, observes her meditating) What is the matter, Mrs. Jason? Are you tired?

Camilla: (As if talking to herself) No, not at all, not yet. I still don't give up. I'll fight. There are bottles of tonic, shoe laces, tooth paste, garters: plenty, plenty things to sell.

Barber: Did you sell some?

Camilla: (disdainfully) Sell! He! Sell whom? There are sales all over - sales! America for sale! But nobody wants to buy it. Isn't that a joke?! Isn't it absurd?! Wherever you go, you see big red signs. "Going out of business" "Going out of business" And people with hungry eyes, stare at the bargains they could get: but empty are their pockets. They unconsciously form their hands clenched into fists.

I watched one, I saw him take out his clenched hand from his pocket, and it was only due to that atrocious habit of control that he didn't smash the window into pieces; but some day he will! And may be I will!

Barber: Will that help? Will that help, my child?

Camilla: I don't know, may be it will. May be that will awake them from their letargy. They don't understand it seems any other language; and I don't think we can be quiet any longer. How much more can we wait? What more can we do to be civilized?

Donald: (Who came in before she finished her sentence) I'll tell you what more you can do. It is not new, but I have discovered its truth from a very distinguished citizen. He is going to be a great man, no doubt. And, according to this distinguished citizen, whose name is Mr. Marty, "A civilized man must not ask, must not wait, but must go and get it". It is precisely the same thing that the revolutionists say: but he is even more exact than they are; because while they advocate "Go and take what belongs to you" he proclaims "Everything is yours that you can get by any means at all That is why, according to my present estimation he is the most civilized person among us. We are merely barbarians, or, as the same Mr. Marty stated before: "Natures fools"; and, we are certainly treated as such. Because what is life,

if not organization? Now, did we the educated organize life? No! we let these Martins or smarties do it, and the creative mind always puts science and knowledge in service to any fool in power. Our present service is to capital: and since everything in our present life depends on large profits - on those solely doing big business - then libraries and schools are no longer of any importance. It was the futile caprice of an abundance of everything that created public institutions, and not our guidance! And now when the prospect of abnormal profits fads, the first victims, of course, are those rendering their services and lives to it, with brain and muscle. Just look at this (He refers to a paper on the table) "Museum of Art Hit by Fund Shrinkage". "City's Grand is Reduced". It is plain, isn't it? And why do we really need education any more? What do we need schools and libraries for such useless creatures as I and others, when a Mr. Marty can become a chemist without having even graduated from a public school? Ha! (Sarcastic) And still you refuse to be his secretary. Isn't it a shame! Isn't is a shame!

Barber:

Donald: That is exactly what we have to do. We'll stop being more secretaries. We, the creative minds, shall dominate. We shall be instructors of life

We shall rule! Or, otherwise be turned into ashes and used in the inventions of a "Marty" as part of his tonic.

Camilla: (Slightly critical) But the trouble is that, while you exercise your mind - talking, Mr. Marty distributes his bottles acting; and in the midst of starvation and decay here, he becomes a millionaire. Ha! And from what? Not from a new product that the public is urgently in need of, but out of an idiotic inspiration mixed with ashes and audacity! "Audacity" that is a good asset for accomplishment. It is by doing that you accomplish, and not by talking.

Donald: (Feeling somehow defeated) Yes, I guess you are right. It is by doing that you succeed (after a while of meditation) What shall I do? (pause) Go out and smash windows? I know that I am not fit even for that. I have absorbed too much book, enough to subdue my sense of self preservation, but not enough, though, to secure a laboratory. Ha! What good are we if we cannot dwell safely in the realm of thought.

Herbert: I wonder how long one could dwell in the realm of thought with an empty stomach?

Donald: Yes, of course, and to fill that stomach, one must smash windows. I see. I see.

(C U R T A I N)

(The following scenes are played within the embrace of a spot consisting of several details which indicate the place where the action occurs.)

A C T T W O

SCENE TWO

A barber chair.

Dick: (Lies stretched comfortably)

Joe: (taking a towel off his face) Oh, what's the use talking about, some day you'll believe it.

Dick: Come, finish me off. I have no patience to listen to your stories.

Joe: Nobody asked you to come in if you have no time. My time is over anyhow; all the boys are gone. Some one might suspect me workin' overtime.

Dick: What if you are?

Joe: I never go against the rules of the majority.

Dick: Why the hell do you stay then?

Joe: Well, I couldn't let you go.

Dick: You couldn't; you needed someone to tell this story of your tonic.

Joe: All right; I am not going to talk any more; no use anyhow. I guess some day I'll find a real gentleman who would appreciate a proposition like mine. My day will come, don't worry.

Dick: Oh, stop croaking. You'll never be more than a barber. You can only talk, talk, as all the barbers do, damn them. I know a young man who is not a barber, and has invented a real tonic. I use it myself, and it seems to be pretty good, too. It's the "Harty-Jess" tonic, he calls it, no crazy notion like yours.

Joe: Damn the "Herty-Jess"! It's my tonic you are talking bout.

Dick: What to hell are you talking about? Why couldn't he invent one if you could.

Joe: You don't believe it, do you? I lived there together with that old fool (pointing to the barber) He introduced me to that dirty crook. He said he had some money to invest and I told him about my tonic; so he's gone and made partners with his cousin the boot black, and me he left out, that crook.

Dick: Why don't you sue him,if all that is true.

Joe: Hell, even to sue you have got to have plenty of money in this God free country. I spent my last hundred and fifty dollars I had saved; and the judge ruled that I can't do anything to him because his tonic, he says, according to expert chemists, contains a few articles more than mine; and these damn experts don't know even, that what he put into my tonic is merely an extract of ashes - frog burned wood - damn h'em!

Dick: Ha! ha! ha! Ha! ha! ha! That's a nice story! Ha! ha! ha! Hell, let me have my coat (gives him a tip) Good night, buddy! You have invented a nice story; keep on telling it to everybody. Ha! ha! Good night! (goes out)

Joe: (To the barber who appears from a corner) Oh, I am getting tired talking out my lungs to these selfish people. They don't even believe you. They think I am crazy.

Barber: You are! Because one should never talk to people of his thoughts or feelings. People like to see, not to listen.

Joe: You are a real philosopher, you are.

Barber: Well, my boy, being a barber for so many years, one must work out some sort of a philosophy about human nature. When people stretch themselves comfortably on these chairs, they feel as if, together with their beards, they must get rid of some feelings accumulated for several days. Well, life isn't so cruel after all. It provides for everything, and so the barber institution was established to shave peoples beards, and to listen to their stories; and the result is, that we, the barbers, are accused of talking too much. That's how the people are, my boy.

Joe: Damn the people! Oh! I'll get my revenge on him. I'll kill him some day! You'll see, and the people will see it!

Barber: What good will it do you? The people will never know the truth of the story. They'll know what the papers will tell; and they'll condemn you, not him. Here is what the paper writes (he reads from a paper) "The MacFugal Chemical Institute Honors Young Scientist for Finest Hair Tonic Ever Invented", and no one will know that that hero is nothing but a plain young fool.

Joe: But I know, and you know, don't we?

Barber: What good is it? You and I and ten others amount to nothing. The public at large will know that he is a scientist, and so it will remain in the records of a chemical institute and in the archives of the press. The future historian will not come to ask me or you about its truth. It is there, in those records where the fancy of a generation remains imprinted, and so the lie remains a lie forever. Yes, my boy, and we can't change it, either. You better go home now, someone else may come in soon, let's close up. It's late.

Marty: (Comes in hurriedly) Can I get a quick shave or am I too late?

Barber: (Not recognising him) I think you are, sir. What do you say, Joe?

Marty: Oh, hello there, Joe! So you are here again. What a surprise. Come, Joe, give me a shave. I stopped off to meet my Jessie. She is waiting at my mother-in-law's. Come, be a sport, I'll give you a nice tip.

Joe: (overwhelmed suddenly by some dark thought, he controls strongly his behaviour and gloomily he says). All right, sit down.

Marty: (stretches himself on the chair whistling a tune)

Joe: (prepares to shave him putting a warm towel on his face)

Marty: So you are here again, in the same old place.

Joe: And you are coming now into the swell joints, do you?

Marty: I always like to enjoy the best for my money.

Joe: But you know that the money you use is mine, prepared for you with my brains... Do you know that?

Marty: (cunningly) Like fun! If you had any brains, you wouldn't stay here shaving people's beards. You would sit in an office like I do and make piles of money. You want to see something. Hi? (He gets out a check from his pocket) This is just a small check for only five thousand. How do you like that?

Joe: Well, I'll show you that I am not as brainless as you think I am (he straps the razor nervously)

Marty: And what are you going to do about it? You just made a fool of yourself trying in the courts. The connections I have now, you have no chance against me.

Joe: Well, I know that, all right, but there are other ways.

Marty: Go ahead, try if you can.

Joe: (Puts his hand heavily on his throat) Now here is one! Don't move or I'll cut your throat.

Marty: What's that? You are crazy?

Joe: No, I am not. Just take that check out of your pocket and sign it, quick!

Marty: (does so under the uplifted razor)

Joe: (puts it quick in his pocket)

Marty: (puts his coat on, walks quickly to the door, then stretches himself dignified, and in a mocking tone, says)

Harty: You are a bad actor! If you wanted to cash this check, you should have kept me imprisoned till you got it cashed. You are a damn fool, my barber! A check can be stopped, ha, ha, and if you are going to make any monkey trials with this check, I'll just tell how you got it from me, and you'll go to jail to the bargain. He-he-he. So long!

Joe: Not for very long, Harty. I'll know better next time!

Harty: O. K. (and he walks out)

Joe: (to the barber) You just watch me! (he tightens his jaws nervously) You just watch me.

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A C T T H R E E

Camilla's and Donald's room.

Camilla: It is just that, Donald. We were not better off materially when we joined hands than we are now under present conditions. We were deprived of many things then, as we are now, with the exception of the short period that you held your job in the library. What is the use, then, being so upset. You cannot alter anything that way.

Donald: If you take it that way, of course.

Camilla: What else can you do. You haven't the slightest idea how good it is that we avoided the coming of a child. The difficulties we are now in are a joke compared with the responsibilities of a child.

Donald: No, no! Don't talk like that. I think it was too bad you did it. If I had understood that before, I might not have come to this.

Camilla: Come to what?

Donald: I went to the McHugal, Camilla, I went to see Marty and I begged him to give me some office work to do.

Camilla: Why did you do it? Why? You didn't have to do ti for my sake. You know that I am willing to wait, and face everything. I made no demands upon you, and you don't have to do anything that will kill your pride. For Heaven's sake, Donald, don't make me feel guilty of things that never entered my mind...

I will not be any happier with more, as long as I have you.

Donald: It is very nice of you, Camilla, but there is something else that I want to do it for.

Camilla: What? May I know it?

Donald: Of course, you may. You don't expect me to keep anything hidden from you. It is something that cannot be done without your will. At any rate, not without you.

Camilla: But I never opposed you in anything, Donald. If I can help you, you know that I'll do it.

Donald: Well, it is this. Life is something that is worth while only when you can give your contribution to it. The poet does it by apprehending ideas through the faculty of imagination. The scientist does it in his laboratory. The learned man by his documents left as treatises for protracted duration. The common men do it by having children. We are reduced to that state. We may still do it while we can, because life goes its way, and we might soon not be useful even for that. It is for that reason that I went to see Mr. Harty. He was even generous enough to give me a hundred dollars in advance. Here! (he takes out the money from his pocket) So you see! My going into a deal with destiny was not for no reason... I submit.

Camilla: (buries her face in her hands propping herself against the side of the sofa: and, she bursts into tears)

Donald: (puts his hand on her shoulder) What are you crying for, Camilla? It does not pay to shed tears. We'll get busy this way, - you at home and I in the office. There is some sense in it, too. What I could not prove, my child might be able to.

Camilla: Why did you have to do it? Why do you have to talk. If you could hear your voice - If you could only detect with what resignation you accept the coming of your child, you would be afraid to talk to me of that - and you shouldn't. No, I don't want it now. I wanted to welcome my child with joy, not with abasement. No I don't want it now.

Donald: You do want it, Camilla, - now - later - you'll always want it, no matter how we have to accept it. Life is the eternal enigma. It did not want us to have one when your body was singing hymns, but when we are in fear of being forgotten hereafter. Life wants us to feed our children with our misery before even they are born, but we have to have one all the same. Something must supersede us.

Camilla: I am afraid, Donald, that I am not fit to serve that purpose. I thought that having children is no degredation. I wanted one not merely as a substitute for anything else. It was my child through my love that I wanted -

Donald: But not my child born of my misery that you desire.

Camilla: I desired your child, Donald, but not your -!

Donald: Go ahead, say it!

Camilla: Oh, how do you expect me to? How can you wish it?

Donald: Well, it was no use then going to the devil. Thank; Camilla, you saved my integrity. I am going to return the few dollars and be chastised.

Randall: (comes in) Good evening! I am sorry to disturb you, but I can to tell you that I am giving up this house. I can't keep it up when half of it is empty, and those still living here, haven't paid their rents for months. I don't think I should be bothered with it anyhow. My daughter, Jessie, asked me to come and stay with her. You know, she is expecting to have a baby. He, - I am so glad. You can come over sometimes to see me when I am there.

Camilla: We will.

Randall: I am going there tomorrow, but you can stay here until the thirteenth. Yeh, it is paid off until the thirteenth. It's another seven days. I wouldn't even ask you for the two months rent that you owe me. I know you haven't anything, so what's the use of making a fool of oneself; and, besides, I am not wicked as you always thought I was. It was ever my wish to be generous; and the end really proves it, doesn't it?

Camilla: Yes, of course, Mrs. Randall.

Randall: (melting in her generocity) Well, I am glad you think so. Everybody says I am. (wipes a tear) Well, I must go. I am so sorry we have to part. Good night! (She walks towards the door, drying her tears)

Barber: (Appears, meets her at the door) Oh, you are here. I -

Randall: (Whispering) Don't tell them that you paid the rent for them: they'll feel bad. (making a grimace) M', are they stuck up! (motions her head and goes out)

Donald: I wonder what the whispering was about?

Barber: Oh that nag, she'll whisper into your ear that groceries are cheaper, so that the next might think that the grocer's wife runaway with a sweetheart.

Camilla: Did she tell you anything about giving up this house?

Barber: She didn't tell me that, but I move out of here all the same. I am tired of this cursed house.

Donald: If you can afford it, it is the best you can do.

Barber: Oh, I am not much of a millionaire now, but I'll get in some money this month. I carry a twenty-year policy which matures this month. It was the only dream I could carry until its realization. (sighs) Yes - five thousand dollars, now, when I am sixty five. What good is it now? What use can I make of it?

Barber: May be you will as long as circumstances will assist but my pinched nose and my ashy grey eyes will not survive any move within you. Well, I know you can't do much for me in that respect, he-he! That is sure; but you can if you wouldn't mind move into the same apartment.

Camilla: We'll see, may we will. I don't think Donald will have anything against it.

Barber: Let's hope he won't. Good night!

Camilla: Good night!

Barber: (goes out hesitatingly)

Donald: Here is another example of life, struggling for todays piece of bread and tomorrow's doom. What use is such a life? Isn't it better to commit suicide, to be destroyed completely without leaving even a good meal for the vermin.

Camilla: But you don't have to do it. You have committed suicide already when you accepted an office job from Mr. Marty.

Donald: No doubt! And, also, when I accept support from that poor old creature. Yes, and that is why I want a child.

Camilla: (After a while meditation) Well, well, I guess you win. I guess you win. (putting her hand on his shoulder, beseechingly) But don't be crude, Don. Make me feel that you love me (almost hysterically) Don't make an operation on me - please (she cries).

Donald: (laughing slightly, diabolically) Oh, don't make me laugh, dear. You talk as if the making of man in a bed is different from that in a laboratory. It is not! The only difference is that man engenders with our love inherits all our weaknesses. What I want is a different man at all - a laboratory man! I want a monster!

Camilla: (shrieks)

Donald: (closes his eyes, then presses his forehead with both hands breathing heavily as one laboring over the conception of a new idea. His whole body begins suddenly to shake with a fever until he falls on the chair beside him)

Camilla: (shivering) What is the matter? What is the matter, Donald? Oh, what came over you?

Donald: (Still breathing heavily) I - I dont know - I am tired, Camilla. I am tired.

Camilla: (helps him to lie down on the sofa)

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A C T T H R E E

SCENE TWO

A crib.

In the crib a baby sleeping, near the crib a maid watching the child, near the maid Joe, watching his opportunity.

Gay music is faintly heard from a distant room accompanied by singing and dancing.

Girl: Is your name really Perety?

Joe: Why, is there anything funny about my name?

Girl: I don't know, but I can't remember it.

Joe: You don't have to remember my name, as long you can recognize my face.

Girl: If I'll see you often, I mayhremember your name; and if you desert me, I'll forget your funny face, too.

Joe: Why you don't think I am making a joke of it. I really love you.

Girl: I like you too, but I can't believe it yet. You see, I just met you a couple of times.

Joe: What's the difference? I could fall in love with you at the first look; in fact, it seems to me as if I know you for centuries.

Girl: Well, I am glad you love me. I think I love you, too, a little; although there ain't much of a future with a poor boy like you.

Joe: How do you know I am poor? I never told you how much I own.

Girl: But your landlady told me, once that you haven't got much of a fortune in your empty trunk up there. She came in once when you were out and I was waiting for you, and asked me whether I know you well. I said "Why," and she said you don't live there long and you don't seem to have brought anything with you. A girl has to watch her step, she said.

Joe: Well, she may be right; but I merely did not have a chance to bring my things over, that's all there is to it. I guess you'll have to believe me if you want me to love you.

Girl: I'd like to.

Joe: All right, than come to me now. I'll have some friends up and we are going to have a real good time.

Girl: But I can't. Don't you hear what is going on there? They are celebrating tonight. They might be off the whole night, and they want me to stay with the baby.

Joe: But you are human too, We can have a party of our own, can't we?

Girl: Oh, Perety, I wouldn't like to disappoint you. You know I would like to have a good time myself, but I can't just now. If I'll go now, they will discharge me; and, you know nowadays, ak it isn't so easy to find such a job and with good money. It's because they are young fools, they pay me so much money for doing almost nothing; and then she

gives me nice presents, too. They are very rich - some people say he is worth a million.

Joe: Oh, what's the difference? You are not their slave.

Girl: Of course not! But one must do his work. I am sorry, but you'll have to give my regards to your friends there and tell them that I'll come over some other time.

Joe: Won't you come over even for one hour?

Girl: I'll see! If the child sleeps well, and they too will be in good humor, I might slip out for a while. There! I hear some one coming. Go! Please, go, Peggy. I don't want them to find anyone here. They don't like strange people with me. I'll see. They might allow me to go.

Joe: (going out) All right, I'll wait for you downstairs and, if you won't find me, come to my room. We'll wait there. (off)

(Marty's voice is heard nearing)

Marty: Ha! ha! ha! Of course, I will. Of course!

(Marty and Jessie appear)

Jessie: (walks over hastily to the baby, whispering) Come here, Mart, look how sweet. Oh, dear, he is darling. He is like you (both smile, then she turns to the girl) Is he sleeping long?

Girl: Half an hour, ma'm. Excuse me, madam, I know I can't go away tonight, but my boy friend wanted me to come and see him for only an hour. May I go?

Jessie: I guess you may. But don't stay away too long.

Girl: Oh, no! I'll be back very soon.

Jessie: All right! Go.

Girl: Thank you, madam (goes off)

Jessie: Oh, Harty, I think we are the happiest people that ever lived! Just imagine us having such a darling baby.

Harty: Well, dearry, I could just imagine you with your fragrant sweet face to give me such a darling baby, but I would have never believed you to become a real lady. Who would believe that this is the same Jessie of just a couple of years ago.

Jessie: And who would believe that you are the same Harty of just a few years ago? You became a real aristocrat. I scarcely believe that I hear you talking, such fine language you picked up.

Harty: That's true, my dear. It depends much with whom you associate. If life gives you a chance, you, yourself would not recognize yourself.

Jessie: Well, we have it anyhow; and I am so glad. Oh, God! If this could continue for ever, for ever! How nice life would be!

Harty: It depends now upon ourselves. We have to keep on the way we started, and the future will be ours.

Jessie: How clever you speak, Harty. How good you are!

Harty: Yes, if luck plays with you, you are clever too. Looking back at the way we started it merely seems a joke. And the funniest part of it is, that it helps - it really helps - this tonic of ours. And

people are buying three and six bottles at a time, as if they were afraid they wouldn't get it later. He-he! Well, I am satisfied, my dear. To the advantage that I have of the big money I am getting in from it I have also gotten that superiority feelong of a man that has really done something for humanity.

Jessie: You know, Harty, I sometimes think we would have to give something to that poor Joe. You know, sometimes when I think of it, it hurts me.

Harty: I was thinking of it myself, but couldn't see any way to do it. If I give him something, he could use it as a weapon against me. It would be good evidence in the court that the invention of the tonic had something to do with him. This would merely mean the end of everything, which does not suit us in any respect.

Jessie: May be you can work it so that nothing would be revealed. May be he'll promise not to tell anything.

Harty: Oh, well! We'll see about it. I was looking for him in several places, but no one knows where he is. Some say he went to Italy. I guess we'd better go in to see our guests. We can't leave them alone. The music calls. We want to dance now - dance and be happy.

Jessie: Just one more look at my darling!
(she puts her lips carefully to the locks of the sleeping baby.) How I love it!

Marty: And how I love you both! (he kisses her, and takes her under the arm walking out rhythmically to the tune of the still playing music.)

(While the light on this spot is still on, another spot is lighted).

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A C T T H R E E

SCENE THREE

The light appears gradually, and with it the sound of music.

Formally dressed couples are dancing. Among the men, Jack and Dick)

Bill: (sits on a chair, smoking heavily; near him the old barber) Old man, it is good to see you here, I bet that you never in your life attended such a party.

Barber: Not much fun in it for me - may be for you young men, but I am too old.

Bill: Who said so! I have known plenty of daddies your age, and older ones, who just started to live. You have to get a spring beauty to stimulate your blood a little bit, ha-ha-ha.

Barber: The men you knew had plenty of money and very little to worry, I suppose.

Bill: And who says that you have to worry. You are not so poor either. For the money you have saved, you can complete your life more gayly than the life you lead now.

Barber: Well, the life I slived was not the happiest. It is no fun to live a bachelor until sixty-five, but the money I have can't change it much.

Bill: It all depends on whom you pick. Here! Do you see that blondy dancing with Dick? She is out for one!

and she is not too expensive, either. You can make her with ten thousand, I am pretty sure.

Barber: He-he. No, no, my boy! I guess I better not think of it. It is quite tempting for one who has lived a wretched life, but ten thousand is just twice as much as poor devil could dream about.

Bill: (drawing a deep sigh of relief) Well, who said that five dam thousand won't do. We have to talk to her and hear what she says. She might be willing because money is scarce nowadays; and you will certainly get a bargain. A proposition like this meant hundreds of thousands a few years ago, while now you can make her - My goodness! Look at her figure! Look at the face she has - like a Madonna, so help me God! If I were you, I certainly would not hesitate. To live but one year with a peach like her is worth more than a hundred barber shops and thousand fiddles. Am I right?

Barber: You may be right, but this is something that you have to consider. It's getting rather late and I would like to see Marty and Jessie before I go.

Bill: O.K. Daddy! Think it over. Here are Marty and Jessie coming.

Marty & Jessie: (come in and go over to the barber)

Marty: (shaking hands) Look who is here. What brought you here, old man?

(Bill disappears in the crowd)

Barber: Bill asked me. He was over at my place yesterday, and he told me that you insisted on my sme coming tonight.

Harty: (Looks at Jessie inquiringly)

Jessie: Yes, we did. Of course, we told him.

Harty: Why sure! An old friend is always welcome.

Barber: I didn't believe him and I wouldn't have come, but there is something I want to talk to you.

Harty: I guess it is about Joe, isn't it? Well, yes, we were just speaking about him a while ago.

Jessie: Yes... we were.... and we will try to do something for him if you can tell us where he is.

Barber: He never gives me any address. He shows up for a day or two and then disappears again.

Jessie: Tell him that we want to see him when he comes.

Harty: I'd rather see him in your place. Let me know when he comes, will you?

Jessie: Listen Harty. How about giving the old man a chance on our radio program?

Harty: That's right, come over to my office and I'll introduce you to our radio announcer. We have a big program. He might give you a chance to play something on your violin. You can play your classical music if you want. He? What do you say?

Barber: I am afraid it will do no good my playing classical music.

Harty: Why?

Barber: Because people who listen to good music are no customers for advertised articles like yours (he coughs evasively) Well, I guess I'll be going. I am too old for a crowd like this. Good night!

Marty & Jessie: Good night! (and they turn to the crowd)

Bill: (appears suddenly near the barber, escorting him to the door) Well, I had a talk with her just now. She said she would like to meet you.

Barber: I really don't know, Bill. It is something too tempting, but too funny....

Bill: Well, you might be sorry within a few days, but it will be too late. So long! We may still talk it over.

Barber: Good night. (and he disappears)

Jack: (is suddenly discovered standing on a chair in the middle of a circle, all with uplifted wine cups) Now, let us drink, folks, for the success of the Marty-Jess tonic and for the living symbols Marty and Jessy!

All: Hurrah! Hurrah!...

(The music starts livelier, and the circle with the cups in their hands dance around Marty and Jessie, cheering joyfully. The dance warms up by degrees.)

INTERLUDE

While the crowd here is happily lost in the whirl of the dance, we see near the crib Joe appearing

from a hidden corner. He puts a few drops from a bottle to the baby's nose, and carefully, almost in harmony with the sound of the music - he carries out the baby. The lights are extinguished slowly, and the music in the same manner continues a long while repeating thelast movement till its most monotonous end.)

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A C T T H R E E

SCENE FOUR

A studio corner.

Bill and Jack are seated on two carved high back chairs.

Bill: Listen to me, Jack. You keep an eye on that cousin of yours. He might spoil for us the whole business. It was not an easy job for me to arrange this meeting. This is a treat for your McHugal with your tonic, but I want my reward. This is the best chance for me to get Dick out, and your cousin must insist upon his release.

Jack: But I told you that this is the only object of his coming here. Poor Harty really thinks that Dicks knows something about the baby. Do you think he would come here for any other reason?

Bill: All right, then, it is settled. Now remember not to tell the Mayor anything of your real intentions. You must make the impression that your McHugal Institute has no other interest to this affair but to prove its gratification to one of its members. What you will say here will not be reported in the papers, anyhow. What we really need is the affair, the publicity for the tonic, that's all - and of course, the release of -

Jack: You leave it to me. Now, go! I think he is coming now.

Bill: (Goes out)

Mayor-Governor: (Appears, dignified)

Jack: (Stands up, makes a bow, politely) How do you do, Sir?

Mayor: How do you do (shakes hands) I have looked through your petition, sir. I can not quite understand what is meant by releasing that Mr. Dick.

Jack: It does not necessarily mean that you have to do it, Sir. It was just introduced to you by McNugal Chemical Institute as a fact, that this Mr. Bill knows something about the disappearance of the Marty-Jess baby. Of course, Mr. Marty might come to you with a plea to release him; but, you know what you have to do about your affairs.

Mayor: Sir, if you had not come here in the name of the McNugal Chemical Institute, I would not permit you here under any circumstances.

Jack: I understand that, Sir, and what I have come here is to try to avoid any misunderstandings. You know how things are in such cases. He is the one unfortunate to have his child kidnapped. In such a state, people are most inconsiderate; and they give way to their feelings different than in other conditions. Of-course, we have tried to avoid his coming here, to you, because no one in the McNugal Institute sees any sense in introducing to Your Honor a matter of this kind. But, since the unfortunate victim insists upon that, the McNugal Institute, with its great influence, could take

but a polite attitude in supporting him. If nothing else could be done in this respect, why shouldn't we at least extend our sympathy.

Mayor: All right. I'll try to be as reserved as one can be, but not more.

Jack: Thank you, Sir; thank you! The Metugal Chemical shall not forget you. (and with a meaningfull smile he walks towards the door) Come right in, Mart.

Marty: (Steps in) How do you do, Sir.

Jack: I think you have met before.

Mayor: Yes, I have had the pleasure at the Century Club, thank you.

Jack: Good by, Sir! Good by, Mart! I am going now.

Marty: Very well! Go!

(Jack departs)

Marty: I suppose the Mayor knows the object of my coming here, now.

Mayor: Not fully. Although the little Mr. Jack explained seems to be quite a complicated matter. Do you see, Sir, this is of such situation that is to be very carefully considered. I can't promise you anything until I have carefully investigated the whole matter.

Marty: But, my child, Sir! This is no politics to me. It is the life of my child! I don't care what results it causes - release him - do anything - but let him tell me what he knows about my child.

Mayor: I am very sorry, but that Mr. Dick is a very dangerous person. It took us quite a long time till we got all the evidence against him to put him in jail, and now we cannot promise his release. He is too shrewd for us to trust any of his statements. He might say so, planning a chance to escape; but we might try to bring him on the witness stand, anyhow, if there is any sense in bringing him at all.

Marty: But he won't appear until I bring him a written promise from you; he will not say anything.

Mayor: I am sorry, Sir, but this is something that I cannot do.

Marty: What can you do, then? What can you do? If, under your government, the citizens are not guaranteed the security of their infants; if, with the power of your police force and secret service agents, you can not, or will not, find the criminal; if you are afraid to release a Mr. Dick to testify, for fear that he might escape - what can you do then?

Mayor: You are an honorable citizen, that is true; but I am the Mayor, and I will have no one ask me such ridiculuous questions.

Marty: Ridiculuous? But I will ask you! Because you are the Mayor, I demand from you my child, safe; and, if you are not going to answer, the governor will have to! Someone will have to answer!

Mayor: You can save yourself all the trouble of going any further, because things are not as easily done as

the people think; but, if you insist upon seeing the governor, go ahead. It would make very little difference (he turns his double-faced mask and appears as the governor) Here I am! What can I do for you, Sir?

Marty: It is about my child that I have come to you now, Mr. Governor. I am ready to part with the income of my invention. I'll do everything, but give me back my child alive! Give me back my child - that is all I want now.

Governor: Why, my dear Sir, you are talking just as if I had x the baby hidden somewhere with me. How do you expect me to return your child?

Marty: There are walking around hundreds of thousands of criminals free, and there is one more in jail by the name of Dick that asks to be released, and he will unveil this mystery. Will you do that for me?

Governor: That's ridiculuous. How do you expect me to do a thing like that! Our citizens would laugh at this - and they would be right!

Marty: Your citizens have so far nothing to lose in this case. They have the thrill of a sensation, but I have my child involved! (in tears) I have my child involved, Mr. Governor!

Governor: (Abrupt) Sir! You'll have to leave! Soon!

Marty: The Mayor, I suppose, was right. You are all one and the same-God d-

(The light is out)

A C T F O U R

SCENE ONE

A bed. In the bed Camilla looking worried, near Camilla an infant)

Barber: (comes in, his face so radically changed that you can hardly trace him, except by his clothes)

Camilla: Oh! Hello, old man! Where have you been for the last few days? We were worried about you.

Barber: (Turns away his face, not being able to utter a word)

CCamilla: What is the matter? Why don't you talk?

Barber: (swallowing a mouthful of tears) It's finished now - everything. (he cries)

Camilla: But what has happened? My God! How changed you look.

Barber: You saved me once from getting hit by that fellow, Bill. Do you remember? But you couldn't save me now. The chance was awaiting its tune, and he got me. He hit me! He hit me!

Camilla: (puzzled) But - but, what for did he hit you? You had no business with him.

Barber: Oh, yes. I had - and a fine business - the finest I ever attempted; and it was a bargain, too.

Camilla: What was it?

Barber: A girl! A girl it was! I wanted to recompense myself for the exciting curiosity which I missed in my youth, and it became more of a mistery to me now than ever. I am not sorry for the fxxxx

four-and-a-half- thousand that they stripped me of, but the girl - not even once. Oh God! How can I die? How can I die? If I had ten thousand more, I would give it to her; but why didn't they let me see her but once - but once? (he cries)

Camilla: So, that is where you were. You were at fighting all your life against him: but he got you just the same, old man.

Barber: He got me! I knew it right after we moved in here that the devil got me. My fiddle busted the first day on these walls.

Camilla: Your fiddle might have cracked on any other wall, if you would hang it up just above such a hot radiator.

Barber: But I took care on it fifty years before - fifty years I have watched it. Why did I forget it now?

Camilla: You did not forget it. It was pure accident.

Barber: Ha! ha! ha! he! Accident! No! It was no accident, at all. It ceased living to me, because another frenzy got into my head - a girl - a creature with a soft skin and dancing body - which I missed during my life began to sing my song; and the fiddle became jealous and committed suicide - that is what happened!

Camilla: You talk as if you voluntarily paid him the cash, so that you may have something to brood about.

Barber: Oh, no! They are skillful, all right. They didn't get me so easy to believe them. In my

fit of emotion I know something wrong is going on; but I saw the bedroom where I was supposed to go with my "wife" right after things would be arranged; and I thought "Devil take it all; if it is only for once, I'll do it and die". And they married me to the girl, oh, yes! But under a fake name and by a fake reverend. They just made me transfer the money to my "wife" then they kept me locked until they got the money from the bank, and then they just chased me out like a dog. Yeh - That is all I got for four-and-a-half-thousand - plenty, I guess! He-he-hey He-he-he!

Donald: (comes in) What are you laughing about?

Barber: Was I laughing? Oh, yes! Ha! Ha! Ha! It was a joke, I was laughing about, ha, ha-ha! Well, good night! (goes out)

Donald: What was the joke?

Camilla: A very bitter one.

Donald: A joke is always bitter. That is why we laugh. We laugh off the fear of becoming as ridiculous as the one at whom we laugh.

Camilla: Why always poignent retorts, Donald? Will that explain why you keep on coming home so late, day after day, since the child was born?

Donald: No, not at all! I am not trying to explain anything.

Camilla: Why not, Donald? I may, at least know the

reason. If you don't love me any more - well, feelings can not be changed unless they change themselves.

Donald: Feelings! He-he-he! What sort of a phenomenon is that? I don't know it.

Camilla: I see! And that is why you did not look at your child even once. Is that why you have insisted on its coming?

Donald: I cannot explain the "why", Camilla. I know only that I "willed" something and -

Camilla: Now you don't want to see it.

Donald: I don't have to see it. It is here - that is all. I wanted.

Camilla: (with a depp sigh and reflection) Oh, God! How different life is when we dream of it. How different my husband and child are from those I mused over. And how different I must have become, myself. If I could begin life all anew, then, I wouldn't mind it (deliriously) but you can't! You can't.. (tears are coming from her eyes)

Donald: I shall never start again, even if I could. What can one accomplish in this ephemeral existence. Before we look around everything is over. What is the use then of turning around an axis without causing a new and more worthy transmutation. I want to reach for the future! I want to reach for the future!

Camilla: (Skeptically and painfully) By what?

Donald: Perhaps by him. (he points to the child)

Camilla: And that is why you come home late?

Donald: Yes! I don't want him to know me. I want him to rise a different one, a stronger one. I want to destroy myself in his behalf and let him carry no trace of my dark age. I want the end of myself! I was working on it simultaneously while his coming. It is there, in the laboratories of the Hellugal, that I spent my nights. They did not need me as a chemist there. Ha! Ha! Ha! They have plenty cranks experimenting on their costs. What they want are men with patents (with satisfaction) Well, I conceived one, but their laboratories were to poor for this invention fan of mine. I needed you, and here he was born - Different! Yes, different! But the job wasn't finished. I needed another laboratory - a place where they synthesize means for destruction - and I used the Hellugal. Ha! Ha! Ha! Now I've got it! A few drops of this poison will calcine a dozen of us but it will not demolish him, not even mar the texture of his tongue. You want to see? Where is a spoon? A spoonful he'll drink and nothing will happen to him (he pours a few drops into a spoon from a bottle that looks very much like the Marty-Jess bottle)

Camilla: (frightened) What do you want to do? No! I won't let you!!

Donald: Very well, I'll not enter your motherly contentement, but you'll let me drink for the new synthesis (and before she is able to stop him, he swallows the few drops in the spoon, and instantly he is burnt, remaining rigid and stiff without moving the spoon from his mouth.)

Camilla: (staying in fright, open mouthed without uttering a sound).

(The light dims off, and another spot is gradually lighted where we discover another bed.)

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A C T F O U R

SCENE TWO

A bed.

In the bed Jessie: near the bed Marty, near Marty Jack standing and speaking excitedly)

Jack: But I don't see any reason at all to get over excited. What they mean by holding the child, is merely business and as long as it is a question of money, then it will take another day or so, and the baby will be returned. As for the safety of the child, I am pretty sure they are taking good care of it; because for the sum they demand as ransom, they can afford to take good care.

Marty: How you talk! How you talk! As if it was nothing but a game.

Jack: Well, to be sure, it is a game. Everything in life is a game. I know how you feel about it. No one, as far as I know wished this to happen; but, still it did happen; and I honestly wish that the baby is found, even this minute, which I hope might really happen. The baby won't suffer anything; and, as for you - well, I guess you'll lose nothing either; because according to Mr. Vale, the McHugal Chemical is going to stand the ransom. So you see, it just happens that nobody is going to lose by it, because the publicity the institute is getting by -

Jessie: (tears her head from the cushion, and cries out in despair) Oh God! Why don't you make him shut his mouth! Why don't he go! Dunce! Mule! Get out of here! Get out!

Jack: Why, I didn't mean to hurt anyone's feelings I just tried to explain.

Marty: Please don't explain anything. You would do much better if you leave us alone.

Jack: All right. I am just trying the best for you. No hard feelings on my part.

Randall: (Who was standing all the time like one listening to gossip, begins suddenly to speak nonchalantly, as if the question was what particular flowers would be necessary for the next affair) I would just raise hell even in the Senate. What good are they there if they can't do as much as to save the life of an infant?

Jack: Well, it wouldn't be a bad idea if you could go there and just tell them that you'll stop the production of your tonic if they don't help you find the baby. I am sure the McKugal will assist you.

Randall: I should say they will. You just have to tell them that it wasn't for nothing that you invented something to cover and cure their scabs. Yes, Sir!

Marty: Where wouldn't I go? What wouldn't I do to find her?

Randall: Well you just tell them as I say. Tell them they'll have to scratch their heads a long time, until they

see you making inventions and bottles and all these things.

Jessie: Is that what you came in to say, mother? Haven't you anything else to say? Have you any idea what is going on here? I have lost my child, mother. My baby!

Randall: (a little sobered) Why, yes! I came in to ask whether you know what became of the old barber. He is arrested because they believe he knows something about -

Jessie: Oh, God! What will they want? What are they doing it for?

Jack: Why, he was here that evening, and Bill says nobody invited him here. Bill is sure that he came here as a spy.

Marty: Spy! Spy! That's all you hear. I am going crazy.

Jack: Well, I guess we'll do much better if we go.

Randall: I think so (both leave)

Jessie: Oh, Marty! What do I need to live for! I have never known any real happiness. Everything before was just like a dim, poor imitation of something - a merry-go-round life without being really merry. It was only when I got my baby that I felt real happiness, that I began to understand what real life is, and to enjoy the beauty of it. Why have they taken it from me? Why?

Harty: Please, dear, don't cry! We can't give up hope. We'll get her back safe. I'll put my money at stake. Nothing will stop me till we get her back safe.

Jessie: If you w could only do it, Harty, just this one more thing. I have never felt any pains, I don't remember being sick, but I feel now that I am breaking down. Every minute I think of it, something drops here (she points to her heart) What a pain! Oh, Hart Tell me, do fathers also feel the same?

Harty: (breaks into tears, trying to control himself) Oh, dear! I cannot explain it, but it hurts - terribly (he begins to cry quietly)

Jessie: (Hugs hisw head, conforting and crying with him)

(Lights out)

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E P I L O G U E

A street. People hurrying in different directions.

Newsboy: (appears carrying a baby in a basket, a policeman follows him, and a crowd after the policeman) Nothing doing! I'll carry it over to the police station myself. They might snap a picture of me with this little creature. He-he-he! It doesn't even cry. He! seems to be satisfied with the situation. He! He!

Policeman: Go ahead, you can have the pleasure of carrying it; but tell me where did you pick it up?

Newsboy: Near the hotel - right near the door of the hotel.

Policeman: Did you find any letter with it?

Newsboy: Of course, I did!

Policeman: What does it say? May be it is the Marty-Jess baby.

Newsboy: Like fun it is! You won't find that baby so easily. This is a poor mother's child. Here is what the letter says: (he reads from the letter) "To him who will find my baby whoever it may be - please don't judge me wrong. I am a mother and love my baby as any other mother, but it is the third day that I have been feeding my baby with water and the marrow of my dry breast I asked my friends and relatives to take it from me but it seems that no one has a great desire

for a poor mother's child. I couldn't endure it any longer, and I have decided to leave it to the mercy of society. I am still young, but I see no other way than to do what my young dear husband did. He was discouraged and it came to such a desperate state that he committed suicide. It seems to me that Society cannot any more use the virtues and the energy of youth, and the one thing for us left is to commit suicide or to commit crimes."

One of the bystanddersː It's a shame, honest! It's a terrible shame!

Anotherː May be the Marty-Jess will adopt this baby and raise it.

Newsboyː Oh, what to hell are you talking about! Their's is a twenty-five thousand dollar baby, and this is only a poor young couple's child.

Anotherː What's the difference? but it's a child, isn't it?

Newboyː Well, the difference is that the other was taken away for twenty-five thousand, and this no one would accept, even if you offer it without money. Well, let's go!

Babyː (suddenly trying to move in the basket) Wait awhile! The basket is getting too tired on me.

Newsboyː (drops the basket in sudden fright) He talks! He talks!@

Babyː (jumps up fwom the basket. All bystanders di sperse in horrow)

Babyː Ha! ha! ha! ha! ha! sha!

Another newsboy: (Not paying heed to the tumult, elbows thru the crowd waving one copy in the air) Extra! Extra! Baby found in a basket! Extra! Extra!

Bystanders: Watch out!! Watch out, boy!

Boy: (Stands a while puzzled, a few paces from the child that keep on growing while on its feet)

Child: Don't be afraid, Come here... (looking at the boy good humoredly) Ha! ha'. ha! a funny destination indeed, a newsboy found me out, and a newsboy carried to me tidings that I was found. It seems as if life here consists of the gossip of life and not of actuality. You have a good word for that sort of life, he-he-he! I would call it fiction, or, rather (whisperingly) Onanism. Ha! ha! ha! Come here boy, let me have one!

Boy: (hands him one copy keeping himself as distant as possible)

Child: Thank you. (Looks in the paper smiling, then, it begins to laugh again) Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha! They are efficient in speed, these creatures: but they seem to be limited in space.

Boy: (seeing no danger, get more confident) What does it mean, buddy?

Child: It means that you are all damn fools! Ha! ha!

THE END